

# NASA-LaRC SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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## WALKING ON THE WILD SIDE

It's really easy to ignore the hazards around the workplace that involve working and walking surfaces. Then it happens, so someone slips, trips, or falls and is hurt. The sad part, other than someone is hurt and work production is reduced, is that it usually could have been prevented. Slips, trips and falls that are accidents are just that, accidents. But what about the ones that are caused by the following:

- \* Slippery or uneven walking surfaces
- \* Unsafe stairs
- \* Walkway or stairway obstructions
- \* Improper shoes
- \* Moving too fast
- \* Being tired, distracted, or not paying attention

The above list is just a few reasons for slips, trips and falls, however, they are some we see all the time and do nothing to correct them. These hazards can usually be prevented by establishing some guidelines on good housekeeping, the guarding of floor opens, platforms, stairways, and the avoidance of unsafe acts.

## IF YOU SEE IT, CORRECT IT

The one thing mentioned above that we can all be involved with is housekeeping. This is where you can help keep yourself and others safe and on the job. Here are a few ideas to think about as you travel within your work area and facility.

- \* Check floors for loose or warped boards, tiles, holes, protruding nails, bent plates, etc.
- \* Place warning signs and barriers around any floor hazards.
- \* Check stairs for loose or missing handrails, slippery, worn, or broken steps, uneven risers, or poor lighting.
- \* Keep floors free of oil, dirt, grease, and litter.
- \* Clean up spills and leaks immediately.
- \* Keep aisles clear, never store anything in aisles and hallways, (even temporarily).
- \* Keep cords, cables, and hoses off walkways.

- \* Don't leave drawers open.
- \* Keep everything in its place, and put things away after use.
- \* Dispose of trash promptly and properly.

## UNSAFE ACTS

No matter how safe you make your work area, there will still be slips, trips, and falls unless you also avoid unsafe acts. Of course we will always have the person with two left feet or someone with the ability to attract accidents to them like a tornado to a trailer park. Here are some "Do's" and "Don'ts" to prevent accidents:

### DO

- \* Pay attention to what you are doing and where you are going.
- \* Walk, don't run and change your direction slowly.
- \* Keep your hands at your sides, not in your pockets, for balance.
- \* Keep all the chair legs on the floor.
- \* Step over or around obstructions, not on them.
- \* Keep one hand free on stairs for support and use the handrails.
- \* Wear shoes with nonskid soles and flat heels.
- \* Use short steps when walking across slippery, wet, or icy surfaces.
- \* Stay away from the edges of loading docks, platforms, manholes, etc.
- \* Obey all warning signs.

### DON'T

- \* Don't carry a load that you can't see over.
- \* Don't climb stairs more than one step at a time.
- \* Don't wear slacks with cuffs so loose you could trip over them.
- \* Don't jump from platforms or loading docks.
- \* Don't fool around or engage in horseplay.

Slips, trips, and falls will still happen, but if you apply these tips chances are that they will at least happen to someone else!